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RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA/DSCA// PRIORITY
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000685

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/15/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY/IRAQ: TURKEY'S IRAQ COORDINATOR TO VISIT
BAGHDAD FEB 23-25

REF: ANKARA 0567

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney for Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

¶1. (C) Turkey's Special Representative for Iraq, Ambassador Oguz Celikkol, told us February 14 that he plans to visit Baghdad February 23 to 25 and hopes to meet with Ambassador Khalilzad as well as Iraqi officials and political party leaders (reftel). He will travel via Turkish military aircraft and asked for U.S. support to obtain flight clearances and permission to use military facilities at Baghdad International Airport. Celikkol asked if U.S. or other coalition forces could also provide security for his travel from the airport to the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad.

¶2. (C) We made no promises to Celikkol but undertook to inform U.S. authorities in Iraq about his visit. We are currently seeking additional information on Celikkol's precise travel plans, aircraft identification, and the size of his delegation, and will provide details through appropriate channels. Celikkol said that, for security reasons, the MFA is not planning to make any advance public announcement of this trip. With Turkish Ambassador to Iraq Unal Cevikoz currently on leave in Turkey (he returns to Baghdad just before Celikkol's visit), Celikkol expressed reluctance to engage the Turkish Embassy there directly. We encouraged him strongly to do so and to stay in close touch with Embassy Baghdad.

¶3. (C) Comment. Celikkol has told us the purpose of his trip is to advance a visit by FM Gul, once the new Iraqi government is in place. We continue to encourage the GOT to make high level visits to Iraq and invite Iraqi leaders to Turkey to show its early and strong support of the new Iraqi government. Any reasonable support we can provide to Celikkol will help advance our goal of further solidifying Iraq's relationship with its only democratic neighbor. End Comment.

WILSON